

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JIDDA 00398 191441Z

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ACTION NEA-06

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COMIDEASTFOR

AMEMBASSY MANAMA PRIORITY

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USCINCEUR

S E C R E T JIDDA 398

LIMDIS

SECDEF FOR MR. CLEMENTS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, SA, BA

SUBJECT: MIDEASTFOR PRESENCE ON BAHRAIN; SAG DESIRE FOR
NAVAL TRAINING

REF: (A) MANAMA 1045

(B) UNDATED LETTER FROM DEPMINDEF TURKI TO DEPUTY

SECDEF CLEMENTS (CIRCA LATE NOVEMBER 1974)

(C) JIDDA 24

SUMMARY: FORMULATION OF A PROGRAM WHEREBY SAUDI NAVAL PERSONNEL
COULD JOIN MIDEASTFOR FOR EXTENDED TRAINING CRUISES MIGHT PROVIDE
GROUNDS FOR ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO GAIN SAG SUPPORT FOR CONTINUED
MIDEASTFOR PRESENCE ON BAHRAIN. END SUMMARY.

1.# IN REF B TO DEPSECDEF CLEMENTS, RECENTLY RECEIVED BY
EMBASSY, PRINCE TURKI SAYS THE FOLLOWING CONCERNING TRAIN-
ING OF SAUDI NAVAL PERSONNEL: "AS YOUR EXCELLENCY KNOWS,
PRACTICAL TRAINING IS IMPORTANT. THE SUCCESS WHICH THE
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SECRET

PAGE 02 JIDDA 00398 191441Z

SAUDI NAVY HAS HAD IN RECRUITING THE NUMBERS PROPOSED IN

THE PLAN CALLS FOR OPTIMISM AND MAKES IT ESSENTIAL TO PROVIDE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PRACTICAL TRAINING TO COMPLETE THE TECHNICAL PREPARATION OF THE SAUDI SEAMAN. THE NUMBER OF MEN WHICH ARE EXPECTED TO GRADUATE FOR THE SAUDI NAVY FROM AMERICAN NAVAL SCHOOLS IN THE NEAR FUTURE CANNOT BE ABSORBED IN THE SAUDI NAVY UNTIL THE MAJOR SHIPS IN THE PROGRAM ARE BUILT. THEREFORE, THE SAUDI NAVY ASKED THE AMERICAN NAVY IN EARLY 1974 TO STUDY THE POSSIBILITY OF ASSIGNING SAUDI SEAMEN ON AMERICAN VESSELS WHILE THE SAUDI NAVAL VESSELS ARE BEING BUILT SO THAT THE TIME COULD BE USED TO GAIN PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE AND SO THAT THE GRADUATES COULD MAINTAIN THEIR PRACTICAL AND TECHNICAL LEVEL. HOWEVER, THE SAUDI NAVY HAS SO FAR GOTTEN NOTHING IN THIS REGARD EXCEPT AN IDEA ABOUT EARMARKING TWO BOATS IN THE UNITED STATES TO THIS END. IN OUR OPINION, THIS IDEA WOULD NOT ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE FULLY, EITHER FROM THE STANDPOINT OF QUALITY OR QUANTITY. I PROPOSE THAT YOUR EXCELLENCY GIVE YOUR PERSONAL ATTENTION TO THIS AS TIME IS PASSING RAPIDLY AND SOME PERSONNEL FROM THE FIRST BATCH ARE ABOUT TO GRADUATE."

2. WE WONDER IF SAG DESIRE FOR EXPANDED TRAINING ON USN VESSELS COULD OFFER GROUNDS FOR POSSIBLE NEW APPROACH TO MINDEF SULTAN OR DEPMINDEF TURKI ON SUBJECT OF MEDEASTFOR PRESENCE AT BAHRAIN. IF MIDEASTFOR COULD DEVELOP A PROGRAM FOR SAUDI NAVAL PERSONNEL, WHEREBY THEY MIGHT JOIN MIDEASTFOR FOR CRUISES OF TWO WEEKS OR MORE ON SOME REGULAR PRE-PLANNED BASIS, THIS MIGHT POSSIBLY GIVE SAG NEW INTEREST IN MIDEASTFOR'S PRESENCE IN BAHRAIN. SAUDIS HAVE WANTED EXTENDED CRUISES FOR SOME TIME; THEY HAVE PREVIOUSLY REMARKED THAT SHORT TWO TO THREE-DAY CRUISES, WHILE NICE, DO NOT PROVIDE THE PRACTICAL TYPE OF EXPERIENCE WHICH COMES FROM ACCOMMODATING ONESELF TO A DAILY ROUTINE-- SOMETHING WHICH CAN ONLY BE A RESULT OF LONGER CRUISES.

3. IF IT WERE POSSIBLE FOR MIDEASTFOR TO ACCOMMODATE SAUDI PERSONNEL ON A REGULAR BASIS, WE COULD ASK SULTAN AGAIN FOR SAG'S HELP AND UNDERSTANDING REGARDING CONTINUED MIDEASTFOR PRESENCE ON BAHRAIN.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 JIDDA 00398 191441Z

4. WE ADMIT THIS IS A LONG SHOT. THE ENTRY OF THE CONSTELLATION INTO THE GULF, IN NOVEMBER, COUPLED WITH REPEATED AND EXPLICIT CALLS FROM THE U.S. AND ISRAEL FOR AMERICAN OCCUPATION OF SAUDI ARABIAN OIL FIELDS AND THE EXCITEMENT CREATED BY SECRETARY KISSINGER'S BUSINESS WEEK INTERVIEW, MAKE ANY OVERT OR PUBLIC SAUDI SUPPORT OF MIDEASTFOR IMPOSSIBLE. THERE IS A CHANCE, HOWEVER, THAT IF THE SAG COULD EXPECT SOME PRACTICAL

BENEFIT IN RETURN, IT MIGHT AGAIN PRIVATELY CONVEY
TO BAHRAIN ITS AGREEMENT TO A CONTINUED MIDEASTFOR PRESENCE.

5. REQUEST COMMENT.

AKINS

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NNN

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